



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, April 25 – May 1, 2009

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2008 annual report) can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

FWP encourages hunters, landowners, and other outdoor enthusiasts to report wolves through the online reporting button or to send in one of the pre-printed postcards available at all FWP offices, many US Forest Service offices, and license providers throughout the state. Information provided by the public helps FWP more accurately monitor wolf numbers and distribution in Montana.

Flights: None.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 4/25, a 5 year-old colt was reported attacked in the Trout Creek area near Superior. FWP Warden Sergeant Curtin received a call from a neighbor and Bradley followed up. The horse owner said she had watched a single wolf attack and bite the colt and she scared it off. She said the colt has puncture wounds from the bite but will likely be fine. She appreciated the FWP calls and did not intend to request an investigation by WS or further technical assistance from either agency. Bradley explained the federal regulations and the state rules that will take effect on May 4 when delisting occurs.

On 4/30, a leasee on private property near the East Fork of Rock Creek near Philipsburg saw a single black wolf harassing an adult horse. He took a shot at the wolf and missed. The wolf ran off and soon after multiple wolves were heard howling in the same direction. These are likely wolves from the uncollared East Fork Rock Creek pack. FWP/WS are exploring options of trapping in the area to try to put a collar out.

On 4/30, WS confirmed that a calf was killed by wolves on private land west of Wisdom. Tracks indicate at least three wolves but possibly four. This is the fourth incident of wolves killing calves on this ranch in the past month. In two different incidents wolves have been lethally removed on this ranch during this period. There has been no radio collar detected during any investigations or monitoring events. WS have been attempting to place a radio collar but trapping conditions have been poor. WS was authorized to lethally remove the rest of the pack (3-4 wolves). Since the last depredation, conditions have not allowed for trapping.

Outreach and Education Activities

Bradley gave wolf presentations the evenings of April 27th and 28th as part of a hunter education course in Missoula. About 80 students attended.

Research Activities

Nothing to Report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

On 4/25, FWP retrieved the carcass of a wolf that was reported as being hit by a vehicle near Lemhi Pass West of Grant. The incident is currently under investigation.

On 4/25, a dead adult male gray wolf was found on the side of Highway 200 in the Blackfoot Valley near Lubrecht. FWP Wardens examined the carcass and believed it to be killed by a vehicle. The carcass was old and had likely been hit sometime this winter and stayed frozen in a snowbank before melting out recently.

Other

NEW -- Delisting Update:

On May 4, gray wolves in Montana will be delisted. Conservation and management will then be guided by Montana laws, administrative rules, and the state's federally-approved plan. See the FWP wolf web page for a Fact Sheet and answers to frequently asked questions:
<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Background: The Final Rule to Establish a Gray Wolf – Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment and Remove it from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species becomes effective May 4, 2009. It was published in the *Federal Register* Vol 74, No. 62 pages 15123-15188 on April 2, 2009. The rule, the literature cited, and Questions and Answers about it are posted on the USFWS website at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>.

The rule delists wolves in Montana, Idaho, eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of northcentral Utah. Wolves in Wyoming will remain under the adequate regulatory mechanisms of the ESA. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to manage wolves in all of Wyoming under the provisions of the 1994 nonessential experimental population rules. Management under the ESA will continue until such time Wyoming develops a regulatory framework that USFWS Service determines meets the purposes of the ESA. After that happens the Service may initiate the mandatory federal regulatory process [including public review and comment] to turn management over to Wyoming.

Many environmental groups have already stated their intent to challenge the federal decision in court, by sending the required "60-day Notice of Intent to Sue" letter to Interior Secretary Salazar. At least 4 notices have been sent to the Department of Interior.

Current Management in Montana until Delisting Takes Effect:

FWP, through an interagency cooperative agreement, is still the lead agency for all wolf conservation and management (within the bounds of federal regulations) so long as adequate federal funding continues to be made available. FWP will continue to monitor wolves, do public outreach, and guide and direct research activities. No public hunting or trapping is allowed. USDA Wildlife Services is still the agency to investigate causes of injured or dead livestock and carry out FWP's decisions to address conflicts, as guided by federal regulations. Montana will continue to stay involved in litigation and any future delisting developments and will continue to seek the most efficient, successful path to delisting. FWP will also continue its collaborative work with Montana Tribes, other state and federal agencies, and the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program.

Check the wolf pages on the FWP website for important information and updates:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Board will meet May 11, 2009 in the Livestock Conference Room 319, Scott Hart Building. The meeting will start at 1pm. The agenda is available from the Program Coordinator – call 444-5609.

The Montana Senate has confirmed the appointments of two new Board members (Michael Leahy and John Herman) and the reappointment of three Board members (Brad Radtke, Jim Cross, and Whitney Wankel). The terms of Elaine Allestad (Chairperson) and Larry Trexler continue.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 657-6464 Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.